



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SAFETY



Deval L. Patrick  
Governor

MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

400 Worcester Road Framingham, MA 01702-5399

Tel: 508-820-2000 Fax: 508-820-2030

Website: [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema)

Kurt Schwartz  
Director

Timothy P. Murray  
Lieutenant Governor

Mary Elizabeth  
Heffernan  
Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 30, 2011

CONTACT: Peter Judge, MEMA PIO  
508) 820-2002

**MEMA ISSUES POWER OUTAGE SAFETY TIPS**

***Extended Loss of Power, During and After a Hurricane, Is a Real Possibility***

FRAMINGHAM, MA - "The severe winds experienced during hurricanes and tropical storms have the potential to cause power outages throughout the Commonwealth during this Hurricane Season," warns Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Director Kurt Schwartz. "As we have experienced in recent years with many other types of storms, strong winds have the capability to topple utility poles and trees, as well as snap tree limbs causing them to fall on power lines and disrupt electrical service."

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has the following tips for dealing with a possible power outage:

- Check flashlights and portable radios to ensure that they are working, and you have extra batteries on hand. A radio is an important source of critical weather and emergency information during a storm.
- If your water supply could be affected by a power outage (a well-water pump system), fill your bathtub and spare containers with water. Water in the bathtub should be used for sanitation purposes only, not as drinking water. Pouring a pail of water from the tub directly into the bowl can flush a toilet.
- Set your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings (remember to reset them back to normal once power is restored). During an outage, do not open the refrigerator or freezer door unnecessarily. Food can stay cold in a full refrigerator for up to 24 hours, and in a well-packed freezer for 48 hours (24 hours if it is half-packed).
- If you have medication that requires refrigeration, check with your pharmacist for guidance on proper storage during an extended outage.

-more-

- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions and guidelines when using a generator. Always use outdoors, away from windows and doors. Carbon Monoxide fumes are odorless and can quickly accumulate indoors. Never try to power your house by plugging the generator directly into household wiring, a practice known as “backfeeding.” This is extremely dangerous and presents an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer. It also bypasses some of the built-in household circuit protection devices.
- In order to protect against possible voltage irregularities that can occur when power is restored, you should unplug all sensitive electronic equipment, including TVs, computers, stereo, DVR, VCR, microwave oven, cordless telephone, answering machine and garage door opener. (Review the process for manually operating your electric garage door.)
- Be extra cautious when you go outside to inspect for damage after a storm. Downed or hanging electrical wires can be hidden by trees or debris, and could be live. Never attempt to touch or move downed lines, and keep children and pets away from them. Do not touch anything power lines are touching, such as tree branches or fences. Always assume a downed line is a live line. Call your utility company to report any outage-related problem.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and Hurricane Preparedness, go to [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema). Follow MEMA updates on *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

-30-